

Dear Representative Luxenberg, Senator Moore, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Sarah Holt. I am a new resident of Hamden, I was a resident of New Haven for 13 years, and am an employee of Yale Medical School.

I am testifying in support of a rent cap and in support of SB4, with changes to better protect tenants.

First of all: **I live in fear of enforcing my own rights as a tenant for fear of my lease not being renewed or getting a rent increase.**

I have always done my own repairs (when the landlord showed reluctance to do them himself, which has been 99% of the time) and am submissive to the landlord knowing full well that I can be forced out just by having the rent raised if the landlord wants to do so.

It maintains an extreme imbalance of power and makes me feel like I have no rights in my own apartment, despite the lease and tenants rights.

Secondly: **I personally have been negatively impacted by rent increases.**

**It's extremely destabilizing for me to uproot my life, pay a great cost financially, cost in time, and cost physically, every time I am forced to move by a landlord raising the rent.**

**I am chronically ill and have chronic pain so it is very difficult for me to move. It causes great stress to me not knowing if or when I'll be forced out based on the whim of my landlord. Having better regulations regarding what constitutes a fair rental rate increase would give me peace of mind and help my body to heal without being forced into a stressful move.**

**I am very active in the art and music scene and ended up leaving the community I had built in New Haven over the course of 13 years because of skyrocketing rents.**

I lived in an apartment on Edwards St which was purchased by a rental conglomerate. The landlords did everything in their power to hide this purchase from the tenants as far into the leases as possible and when the leases were up the rents skyrocketed— every single tenant in the house was forced out by the increase in cost, no one could afford stay.

One tenant even tried to fight the increase in court but the battle was too exhausting. My own rent increased by about 1/3rd. And once I left it was listed at an increase of just short of twice the old rent.

They made zero changes to the apartment in-between tenants to justify this rent increase— they didn't even paint the walls. The windows were so old and ill-filling you had to use nails to hold them shut (but they were not replaced).

In the 13 years I lived in New Haven this is not the only apartment I experienced this with.

These apartments are not healthy to live in. Any home owner knows that 'time passing' only means more issues to repair in a house. But that's not getting done. The houses are falling apart while the rents increase for the simple fact that the landlords can raise the rent whenever they simply want more money, or whenever they want to force a tenant out. So the quality of the rental experience and the cost of the rental experience drift farther apart every year.

We need to get a handle on these insane rents until they're back in line with what the rental experience reflects, rather than simply reflecting the inordinate power the landlords hold over the universal need for housing all humans experience. The landlords need to be regulated better.

**For these reasons,**

I strongly support a rent cap, HB 4 would be stronger with the following changes:

- **The cap should be lower—I suggest 2.5 or 3%.** This tracks pre-pandemic average rent increases and would be affordable and predictable to tenants.
- **It should really really cover apartments in between tenants** so landlords can't push out tenants to increase the rent.—> This happens so much that I constantly see landlords discriminate against tenants that aren't yearly! Who (besides students) can afford to move every year!? People who aren't students deserve stable housing!
- **It should expand good cause eviction protections** to cover all tenants so they have greater stability in their homes.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Holt  
Hamden